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ABSTRACT

Eighteen first grade students participated in a study to determine if reading achievement would be significantly higher for children who experienced reading-while-listening to children's literature as an enrichment activity than for children who did not have a similar experience. The children were divided into two treatment groups of equal size. Members of the experimental group were provided with books so that they could follow along as the teacher read to them during the daily storytime activity. Members of the control group watched and listened through earphones to a sound filmstrip of a book, but did not see the printed text. After several days, the groups were reversed. The same materials were used, but the control group merely listened to the teacher and did not follow along in books. The children were then interviewed individually about their concepts of reading and were administered a standardized reading test. The results showed that reading-while-listening as an enrichment activity had no significant effect on first grade reading achievement. (FL)

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EFFECT OF STORYTIME READING WHILE LISTENING ON FIRST GRADE READING ACHIEVEMENT

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

By

Mary Ann C. Johnson

Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

to

Kean College of New Jersey

April 1979

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of storytime reading while listening on first grade reading achievement. Eighteen children in the author's first grade class comprised two treatment groups of nine children each. The study was made during the first half of the school year. Pre- and post-tests were given. Data were tabulated and comparisons made. Results showed that experiencing reading while listening of children's literature as an enrichment activity had no significant effect on first grade reading achievement. However, children's high interest and motivation for early independent reading of the trade books of the study were observed by the author.

In the media-explosion years of the 1960's and '70's more and more readalong materials have been made available for young readers. Some claim to teach reading, some to develop specific reading skills, some to motivate reading interest, and some to both teach and motivate. Publishers' catalogs of instructional materials list costly libraries of children's literature and accompanying word-for-word cassette narrations (articulated by the authors themselves or equally famous theater people), one-book/one-cassette packages, and listening center sets of several copies of a book plus one cassette. Some media companies list only such kind of material. Scholastic Book Services newspapers available to elementary school children offer readalong books and records at attractive prices and listening center sets to teachers as bonus items. Supermarket and toy and department stores market such items published by Golden Records, Peter Pan Records, and others, often in conjunction with Romper Room television programming. Door to door Avon representatives offered a children's readalong promotion item for Christmas 1978. Scholastic Book Services Classroom Library, including fifteen readalong records and books, has been part of the author's classroom equipment for several years, as has Educational Progress Corporation's audio reading progress laboratory (readalong cassettes and booklets used to develop or reinforce specific reading skills).

Neither instructional nor motivational value of readalong materials for developmental readers has been substantiated by reading research. Reading-while-listening does not appear in ERIC as a reading subtopic until 1978. The single reference, a British study by Daly, Neville, and Pugh (1975), claims to be the first annotated bibliography on the subject and confirms that few empirical studies have been done and these mainly with handicapped or remedial readers.

Related theory discussed by Daly, et al. (1975) includes Goodman's model for reading and the suggestion that reading-while-listening may be useful at the aural stage (somewhere between the oral reading-aloud stage and the silent stage), the argument that reading-while-listening counters adverse effects of analytical approaches by giving the child an enjoyable experience of achievement in reading, the problem of what sort of information processing happens in reading-while-listening, and the possibility that reading by adults is accompanied by subvocalization, which may or may not be deterred in reading-while-listening. Cleland and others (1968) reported incidence of vocalism during silent reading in intermediate-grade children and the desirability of this vocalism as an adjunct to the reading process.

In one study reported by Daly, et al., rate of narration for reading-while-listening had to be adjusted according to ability of the children, slowed down for slower ability children. Expanded speech gadgetry was used in some studies. The author's observations of readalong materials shared by

first graders at Show and Tell time revealed a pace of narration far beyond the ability of beginning readers to follow and vocabulary too difficult for their level.

Wartenberg (1976) reported research efforts of Gregory Williams, who examined and field tested Viking Press readalong materials using well-known children's literature. For the seven selections offered, readability levels ranged from preprimer to fifth grade.

While it would be interesting to explore the publishers' rationale for producing and selling readalong materials and that of consumers for purchasing them, to examine and classify the readability levels of United States readalong materials, to determine which, if any, reading skills could be developed or reinforced with such materials, for which students, and with which materials, to measure motivational impact, if any, of readalong materials at various stages in developmental reading, to learn if two information channels can be used simultaneously or if that is what happens in reading-while-listening, and to adapt reading and listening comprehension tests to measure reading-while-listening performance, the author intends only to study enrichment storytime reading-while-listening effects on reading achievement in one first grade.

Hypotheses

For the purpose of this study, it was hypothesized that first grade reading achievement is significantly higher for

children who experience reading-while-listening of children's literature as an enrichment activity than for children who do not have a similar experience. It is also hypothesized that the concept of reading for the reading-while-listening group will more nearly match that for adults than the concept for reading obtained by children of the control group.

Definitions, Assumptions, and Limitations

Auding is defined as reception and comprehension of spoken language; auditory figure ground, as the ability of a child to focus on the essential sound elements and suppress the nonessential noises; aural, as learning through listening, attending with the ears; and subvocal reading, as movements of the tongue, lips, or vocal chords during silent reading, slowing rate (Bush and Andrews, 1973).

In the planned study it will be assumed that all children will participate in the developmental reading program prescribed by the Board of Education, that all children will have auditory and visual acuity according to school health records, that appropriate readability level materials of interest will be available, that the children will be familiar with the reading register (Downing, 1975), that they will attend to the task of looking at the books while listening to the narration, and that the rate of narration will be appropriate for the ability of the children.

Some additional limitations will be the paucity of prior research for reference to methodology and conclusive findings,

the absence of I.Q. scores for equating experimental and control groups, the small size of the sample, the brief time of the study, the economic factor in choices of materials, the absence of assurance that the relevant part of the visual display is being attended to simultaneously with the aural display, and the just-beginning-to-learn-to-read status of the sample group of children.

Analysis of Research Procedures

Permission was given on October 10, 1978 by the Board of Education to study the effect of storytime reading while listening on reading achievement during the period October 15, 1978 to February 15, 1979.

The children of the study were members of the author's first grade class in Gillette School, an elementary school with a kindergarten and two classes of each of four grade levels (1 to 4). Children are bused from Gillette, Stirling, and Meyersville; a few walk to school. Socio-economic background is essentially white, middle-class. Five of the children were new to the school; one was retained from another first grade in the school. All but the five new children had Open Court readiness instruction in Gillette's kindergarten. The retained child had Open Court instruction in first grade.

All of the children participated in the developmental reading program in first grade, individualized in small-group instruction according to ability and pace in learning. One-to-one help was given where needed, and different

reinforcement games or materials were used according to need. All components of Ginn 360 and Lippincott Basic Reading were used as well as language experience and related language arts experiences. In the first two weeks of school the children learned the meanings of the terms of the reading register: letter, word, sentence. This instruction was correlated with writing instruction; children used a finger to space "between the words," or "between the letters." "Sentences" were referred to in experience charts.

The Ginn 360 Level 1 Mastery Test was administered to the total group on the second and third days of school, September 7/8, 1978, and tentative, flexible reading groups were formed early. The author had the benefit of several weeks' observation of children's functioning in the reading groups, rate and style of learning, and general strengths and weaknesses before administering the Metropolitan Readiness Tests Level II, Form P, on October 22, 1978 (tests ordered subsequent to BOE approval and received on October 21, 1978). It was decided prior to testing that because the listening center accommodates only nine children, two treatment groups of nine children each would formally participate in the study. The three children who would participate only incidentally were the child known to be moving in December and two children known to have a short attention span. (It was later learned that one of the participating children was to move also.) Pairs were formed on the basis of the

Metropolitan test scores, age, sex, Ginn 360 Level 1 scores, hierarchy placement in family, and classroom teacher observations. Members of the pairs were randomly assigned to the two treatment groups. The experimental group was named "Christina's storytime group;" the control group was named "Krista's storytime group."

On November 7, 1978 hearing of all children was checked by the school nurse. One child in the experimental group was found to have a familial problem of blocked tubes and ear infection. Shortly thereafter one child in the control group was found to have the same difficulties. Both children were treated by family physicians. The control child received help from the school reading teacher throughout the study because of auditory discrimination difficulties. All children were judged to have adequate vision.

Sets of ten books each were ordered from Scholastic Book Services, the choices limited to the best literary selections offered in the October-November-December first grade Weekly Reader at nominal cost (fifty to seventy-five cents per paperback copy). Some books were ordered from Readers' Choice Scholastic Book Services 1978 Catalog ($0.95 to $1.25 per paperback). The books chosen varied in size of text print, amount of space surrounding words, length of story, length of sentences, number of words on a line, complexity of sentence structure, prose and poetry, fantasy and realism, and styles of illustration. All have been

reviewed and recommended for young children by experts in the field of early childhood literature. Readability studies were not made, since many trade books classified as first grade readability are not necessarily of literary value. It was hoped to enrich the children's reading experience with literature at storytime.

Storytime is a daily classroom activity -- the classroom teacher reads a story to the children. Two of these periods of time were used for experimental treatments. In the first, the experimental group followed along in books while the teacher read at a slowed rate, in logical phrasing, allowing time for picture perusing, reminding (for the first books only) to move markers down to the next line, and signaling page turning. This activity took place after lunch in the library center of the classroom, the children grouped around a round table. Concurrently, at the opposite side of the classroom the children of the control group watched and listened at a nine-earphone listening center to a sound filmstrip of a book chosen from one of three Weston Woods collections: Winter Stories, Distinguished Picture Books, and Stories from Many Lands. No printed text appears in the visual display. The narration of this book was always at normal rate on cassette recording. An automatic sound filmstrip machine was used the first four weeks. When it broke down, a regular filmstrip machine and cassette recorder were used, set up by the teacher and operated by the children.

The added responsibility was so enjoyed by the children that the second arrangement was used thereafter, even after repair of the first machine. Because of the slowed rate of narration in the experimental group, the control group watched and listened to most sound filmstrips twice in order for both groups to finish at the same time. They were delighted to do so.

At the second storytime period, a day or two later, the groups were reversed. The same materials were used, the single difference being that the control group did not follow along in books but merely listened to the teacher read at a normal rate. Very often both groups finished at the same time, the experimental group seeing the filmstrip only once. The control group children were told that they would hold the books starting in March.

The ten copies of the reading-while-listening books read in the classroom library center were put in the same place each time and were cumulatively available to all the children of the class for perusal at free times or at D.E.A.R. time (twenty minutes a day). One library copy of each book shown in the sound filmstrip was also placed here for perusal. While these books were not allowed to be taken home, some of the children of both groups requested hardcover copies during weekly visits to the school library, often renewing them.

The books and sound filmstrips used in the study were as follows:

Date	Book Read by Teacher	Sound Filmstrip
11-9-78 11-10-78	Where the Wild Things Are, story and pictures by Maurice Sendak.	Blueberries for Sal, Robert McCloskey, 1948.
11-13-78 11-17-78	Mouse Soup, Arnold Lobel, 1977.	The Biggest Bear, Lynd Ward, 1952.
11-21-78	half of The Little Engine That Could, Watty Piper, 1961.	Make Way for Ducklings, Robert McCloskey, 1941.
11-28-78	second half of Little Engine.	White Snow, Bright Snow, Alvin Tresselt, pictures by Roger Duvoisin, 1947.
12-1-78	groups reversed	
12-4-78	The Happy Day, Ruth Krauss, pictures by Marc Simont, 1949.	The Happy Day, idem. Where Does a Butterfly Go When It Rains? May Garelick, pictures by Leonard Weisgard, 1961.
12-11-78 12-12-78	Animals in Winter, Henrietta Bancroft and Richard G. Van Gelder, illustrated by Gaetano di Palma, 1963.	Stone Soup, Marcia Brown, 1947.
12-18-78 12-19-78	The Elves and the Shoemaker, retold by Freya Littledale, pictures by Brinton Turkle, 1975.	The Tomten, adapted by Astrid Lingren from a poem by Viktor Rydberg, pictures by Harald Wiberg, 1964.
12-22-78	Goodnight Moon, Margaret Wise Brown, illustrated by Clement Hurd, 1947. Paperback given to each child in class by classroom teacher. One copy kept in classroom with reading-while-listening books.	
1-3-79 1-4-79	The Gingerbread Man, An Easy-to-Read Folktale, pictures by Ed Arno, 1967.	The Big Snow, Berta and Elmer Hader, 1948.

Date	Book Read by Teacher	Sound Filmstrip
1-8-79 1-9-79	Chicken Soup with Rice, A Book of Months, Maurice Sendak, 1962.	The Snowy Day, Ezra Jack Keats, 1962.
1-17-79 1-18-79	Benjamin Budge and Barnaby Ball, Florence Parry Heide, pictures by Sally Mathews, 1967.	Andy and the Lion, James Daugherty, 1937.
1-22-79 Groups reversed same day	Caps for Sale, Esphyr Slobodkina, 1949.	What Do You Say, Dear?, A Book of Manners for All Occasions, Sesyle Joslin, pictures by Maurice Sendak, 1958.
1-29-79 1-31-79	Too Much Noise, Ann McGovern, pictures by Simms Taback, 1967.	The Story of Ping, Marjorie Flack, lithographs by Kurt Wiese, 1933.
2-6-79 2-8-79	Georgie, Robert Bright, 1944.	Madeline's Rescue, story and pictures by Ludwig Bemelmans, 1951.

On September 20, 1978 the children of the class were interviewed one on one regarding their concept of reading using Tovey's (1976) questions:

1. What do you think you do when you read?
2. Do you look at every word when you read?
3. If you look at every word, do you think you need to? If you don't, should you?
4. Do you look at each letter in every word you read?
5. If you look at every letter, do you think you need to? If you don't, should you?

On January 23, 1979 the interviews were repeated. No discussion regarding a concept of reading had been held by the children and teacher between the time of the interviews.

In February 1979 the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests Primary A, Vocabulary and Comprehension for Grade 1 (1965), were given to the whole class. A comparison of the test results of both groups was made utilizing the t test for small groups to determine the significance of difference between the means to meet the purposes of the study.

Results

Reading Achievement

There was no support for the author's hypothesis that first grade reading achievement is significantly higher for children who experience reading-while-listening of children's literature as an enrichment activity than for children who do not have a similar experience.

The Ginn 360 Mastery Test 1 was given to the entire class on September 7/8, 1978. The subtests are letter identification (small letters, capital letters, letter matching), auditory discrimination, and phoneme-grapheme correspondence. Table I shows a comparison of total raw scores of both treatment groups.

Table I
Ginn 360 Mastery Test 1

	M	S.D.	t	N
Experimental Group	82	8.36	1.28	18
Control Group	84	3.58		

The Metropolitan Reading Readiness Tests (1974), Level II, Form P were given to the entire class on October 22, 1978. Table II shows a comparison of Pre-Reading Skills Composite Scores of both treatment groups.

Table II

Comparison of Pre-Reading Skills Composite Scores on the Metropolitan Reading Readiness Tests, Level II, Form P (1974)

	M	S.D.	t	N
Experimental Group	60	5.567	0.82	18
Control Group	61	4.459		

The t test scores of 1.28 and 0.82 of the pretests indicate a tendency in the control population to show greater readiness for reading, but the differences are not significant.

Table III shows characteristics of age and sex of the subjects of both groups. These data suggest that the control group was somewhat younger and contained proportionately more girls than did the experimental group. Since one control subject moved before the study was completed, statistics of mean age and number of girls of controls more nearly matched those of experimentals at the time of post-tests.

Table III

Age and Sex of Subjects - September 8, 1978

Subjects	Experimental Group			Control Group		
	Date of Birth	Age	Sex	Date of Birth	Age	Sex
1	1-8-72	6-8	M	8-14-72	6-0	F
2	1-26-72	6-8	F	3-20-71	7-5	F
3	3-1-72	6-6	F	3-9-72	6-5	M
4	6-2-72	6-3	F	6-24-72*	6-2	F
5	11-29-71	6-9	F	11-28-71	6-9	F
6	3-18-72	6-5	M	2-29-72	6-6	M
7	12-31-71	6-8	F	10-3-71	6-10	F
8	9-30-72	6-11	M	8-27-72	6-0	M
9	2-28-72	6-6	M	3-26-72	6-5	F
	Mean age:	6-6		Mean age:	6-3	
	Number of boys:	4		Number of boys:	3	
	Number of girls:	5		Number of girls:	6	

*Subject moved before end of study

Table IV shows developmental reading group placement for subjects of both groups and their basal series assignments at the beginning of first grade and at the conclusion of the study.

Table IV

Developmental Reading Group Assignment - September 1978

Subjects	Advanced Readers in Sight-word Approach	High-Average	Low-Average
Experimental			
1		x	
2		x	
3			x
4	x		
5		x	
6		x	
7		x	
8	x <---------- moved up	x	
9			x
Total	2	5	2
Control			
1		x	
2	x <---------- moved up	x	
3		x	
4*	x		
5		x	
6		x	
7		x	
8	x		
9			x
Total	3	5	1

*moved to another state before end of study

Table IV (Continued)

Basal Series Placement

	Advanced Readers in Sight-word Approach	High-Average	Low-Average
September 1978			
Ginn 360	Level 3	Level 2	Level 2
Lippincott	Preprimer	Preprimer	Preprimer
February 1979			
Ginn 360	Level 5 p. 87	Level 4 end	Level 4 p. 28
Lippincott	1^1 p. 51	1^1 p.51	Primer p. 71

The Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests, Primary A, Form 1 (1965) were given to the whole class on February 15, 1979. A comparison of test results of both groups was made utilizing the t test for small groups to determine the significance of differences between the means. Table V shows a comparison of Comprehension Subtest results of both treatment groups.

Table V

Comparison of Comprehension Subtest Scores
Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests,
Primary A, Form 1 (1965)

	M	S.D.	t	N
Experimental Group	65	8.595	0.54	17
Control Group	67	5.062		

The t of 0.54 indicates that the mean differences are not significant and could have happened by chance. Mean differences are slight and, it can be noted, that if the depressed score of one subject in the experimental group (diagnosed to have a serious speech problem midway through the study) were omitted, the comprehension score means of both groups would be equal.

Table VI shows a comparison of Vocabulary Subtest results of both groups.

Table VI

Comparison of Vocabulary Subtest Scores
Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests,
Primary A, Form 1 (1965)

	M	S.D.	t	N
Experimental Group	66.3	5.446	0.07	17
Control Group	66.5	5.873		

The mean standard scores are essentially equal. There was no significant difference in achievement.

Table VII shows a comparison of total reading results of both groups.

Table VII

Comparison of Total Reading Scores
Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests,
Primary A, Form 1 (1965)

	M	S.D.	t	N
Experimental Group	131	13.589	0.32	17
Control Group	133	10.374		

The t of 0.32 indicates no significant difference in results.

Appendices I and II show ranked score results for the entire class on the Gates-MacGinitie Comprehension Subtest and Vocabulary Subtest, respectively. Membership in treatment groups is indicated. The comprehension range of achievement is 3.6 to 1.5 and the vocabulary range is 3.5 to 1.7 for both populations. Since the test was given in the fifth month of school, it is interesting to note that all students were at grade level or above.

Concept of Reading

On September 20, 1978 the children of both groups were interviewed individually regarding their concept of reading using Tovey's (1976) questions. The children said very little. Some said nothing or answered "read books," "read words," "look at a book," to the first question and simply nodded or responded "yes" to the other questions.

On January 23, 1979 the author repeated the interviews. Table VIII records the responses of members of both groups, many of which describe reading as "sounding out words," similar to the responses obtained by Tovey. There was no support for the author's hypothesis that the concept of reading for the experimental group would more nearly match that for adults. Although children of both groups were reading the books of the study and many other trade books from the school library, they did not articulate a reading-for-meaning concept.

Table VIII

Concept of Reading - January 23, 1979

Responses to Question 1 (reading)	Responses to Questions 2 and 3 (words)	Responses to Questions 4 and 5 (letters)
Experimental Group		
1 - Sound out words. Reading is for fun sometimes and sometimes it's for stories you write. Sometimes it's for work.	No. When you read a little, you can just read a word.	Sometimes. No.
2 - You want to learn to read; so you look at the words, and you sound them out if you get into trouble. You can take how long you want to. You learn to read so you can be a good expert at it so you won't get stuck on words when they're big.	Not every one; you take turns with people reading them.	Yes, so we can read better and get to be a good reader.

Table VIII (continued)

Responses to Question 1 (reading)	Responses to Questions 2 and 3 (words)	Responses to Questions 4 and 5 (letters)
3 - You read words,	Yes. Yes.	Yes. Yes.
4 - Have fun.	Yes. Yes.	No, you don't need to because sometimes you recognize the word.
5 - You sound out the words, and it's fun too. Sometimes it's for fun so you can just learn how to read.	Yes. Sometimes.	Sometimes. Yes.
6 - You look at the words. You learn how to read a book.	Yes. Yes.	Yes, to see if you can sound out the words.
7 - You sound out the words. Then you can read harder books each time, like you get bigger sentences. You enjoy them - good stories.	Yes. Yes.	Yes. Yes.
8 - Sound out the words. Fun.	Yes. Yes.	Yes. Yes.
9 - Look at letters and try to think in your head and you sound it out in your head and then it comes out your mouth and you say the whole word.	Yes, before you read so you know what they look like.	Yes. Yes, to sound out.

Table VIII (continued)

Responses to Question 1 (reading)	Responses to Questions 2 and 3 (words)	Responses to Questions 4 and 5 (letters)
Control Group		
1 - Sound out words. Practicing.	Yes. Yes.	Yes. Yes.
2 - Look at the words. For having fun.	Yes. No.	Yes. No.
3 - Sound out words. For fun sometimes. When you go to high school, if you don't know the words, your mother will have to tell you all the words. You learn to read so you'll be good in high school.	Yes. Yes.	Sometimes. Sometimes.
4 - (transferred from school)		
5 - You sound out the words. So you can read a book when you grow up. And when you get married, you can read to your children. Now you can read one when you get home from school, or in school.	Yes. Yes.	Yes, so you can sound it out better. Yes.
6 - You learn.	Most of the time. Yes.	Yes. Yes, so you learn better.
7 - Sound out words. You go to the reading center for reading groups.	Yes. Yes.	Yes. No, not the words you don't sound out.
8 - Sound words out. To learn more words - big,	Yes. Yes.	Yes. Yes.

Table VIII (continued)

Responses to Question 1 (reading)	Responses to Questions 2 and 3 (words)	Responses to Questions 4 and 5 (letters)
whole words. Sometimes you can read the words without sounding out.		
9 - Sometimes you sound out words. You learn how to read.	Sometimes. Yes.	No; not really.

Some patterns of responses can be seen in Table IX:

Table IX

Concept of Reading
Pattern of Responses

	Experimental Group	Control Group
References to books rather than to words	3	1
References to reading as fun	4	2
References to learning how to read	4	4
References to sounding out words	5	6

Conclusions and Implications

Reading Achievement

While the statistical data show that experiencing reading-while-listening of children's literature as an enrichment activity had no significant effect on first grade reading achievement, it is of interest to report the affective dimensions of the study.

During the children's twenty-minute daily D.E.A.R. time (free reading) following lunch, the author observed that of all the many books in the classroom, the reading-while-listening books were the first choice of the children of both groups. They formed small groups spontaneously (across ability lines but always boys with boys and girls with girls--neither a condition of their small-group developmental reading instruction). The availability of multiple copies of the reading-while-listening books may have motivated the forming of small groups and the social aspect of the activity. The children read orally, peers giving help to each other. For a particularly loved book, lineups formed by the teacher's desk with children individually requesting to read a page from the new book.

The single library copy of each of the books used at the listening center in sound-filmstrip form was seldom, if ever, chosen for reading, nor were these books requested in the school library (once-a-week visit).

The shared enthusiasm for the books of the study was not anticipated in the research design, and the limitation of the small sample population all housed within one classroom may have promoted general high interest of the total group but reduced opportunity for defining an achievement difference between treatment groups. That all the children of both groups scored at or above grade level in vocabulary and comprehension on the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests may have been influenced by the extra practice in independent reading of the readalong materials.

Since so few studies exist of the reading-while-listening activity with normal-ability children, some observations of methodology with children just beginning to read will be mentioned. From the outset of the study it was observed that the children needed time to look at the pictures before attending to the words, time to place markers under lines of print, and time to turn pages (very slippery in paperback books), and, most important, slowed rate of narration because of uncontrolled vocabulary and complexity of sentence structure. None of these conditions prevailed in a brief try with a professionally recorded narration of a book: the second book of the study, Mouse Soup. It is apparent that at this early stage in the reading lives of first graders, the teacher has to do the reading and make the necessary accommodations. In the confines of this arrangement, however, much was observed about factors that facilitated ease of

independent reading by the children following the reading-while-listening introduction of the book and about the characteristics of the activity itself.

By the third "sitting," second half of Mouse Soup, the teacher no longer had to signal marker moving or page turning. The children of all abilities followed along with no difficulty. It was felt that the large print of Mouse Soup, division of sentences into one phrase per line, and large amount of space between lines and in margins were helpful. These characteristics of visual display plus high interest in story content proved to be good orientation to reading-while-listening. The book was a popular choice for independent reading for many weeks despite difficult vocabulary for children just beginning to read.

Given an adequate budget of money and time to make the best possible choices of books for literary quality and appropriate visual display and readability level, a teacher could introduce first grade children to a wide variety of trade books in a slowed-rate reading-while-listening activity to encourage early independent reading.

The fourth book of the study, The Happy Day, combined minimal text (although uncontrolled vocabulary), large print, perfect match between pictures and text, and high interest in animals by first graders. The least competent reader in the experimental group read it perfectly the same day and again the next day; yet only four of the words were sight words

known to him. He may have made use of developmental reading instruction of short vowels, consonant blends, inflected endings, punctuation, and picture and context clues for the other words. He imitated the teacher's intonation for the last paragraph of the story, and general intonation imitation was observed throughout the study. He confidently worked at reading every storytime book thereafter.

In January, rate of narration was gradually increased. It was observed that books with repetitive refrains were much loved and read and reread many times over: Chicken Soup and Rice, The Gingerbread Man, Too Much Noise, and Caps for Sale. Most of these books had big print, much space around the words, and sentences separated into phrase lines, all facilitating independent reading by young readers despite uncontrolled vocabulary. Children of the experimental group did not tolerate listening to Too Much Noise; they simply joined in--choral reading fashion. Children of the control group found it dull to listen to but could be seen the next day enjoying reading it independently. Interest by first graders in the reading process per se was clearly evident. By the end of January the teacher's rate of narration was normal. An implication is that during the second half of first grade, normal-rate cassettes-plus-books materials could be used. However, it is recommended that narrators allow time for picture viewing and page turning.

The sound filmstrips of children's literature were thoroughly enjoyed by both groups. One wonders, had there been nine copies of each of these books available or had narration been associated with the printed words at appropriate rate rather than with a filmstrip of the illustrations only, if the children would have tried independent reading of these books despite varying readability levels. The screen appears to have a magnetism of its own--perhaps it should be used for story reading as well as storytelling.

The author would include storytime reading-while-listening of children's literature in future first grade curriculum planning because of observed high interest and early motivation to read independently by young children. Opportunities were provided for application and extension of word recognition and comprehension skills of developmental reading instruction and for appreciation of the language and illustrations of good books. There was joy in reading.

Concept of Reading

There was no support for the author's hypothesis that concept of reading for the reading-while-listening group would more nearly match that for adults than the concept of reading obtained by children of the control group. Tovey's (1976) interview questions produced responses similar to those reported by Tovey. The children of both groups, by their responses, acknowledged being in the learning-how-to read stage, i.e., immature readers. The main focus of their

concept of reading was on the decoding strategy of word recognition rather than reading for meaning. This may have been a true perception or a lack of articulation. In actuality they had demonstrated silent reading for meaning many times. The responses reflecting that most of the children looked at all the words and attended to every letter of the visual display could possibly have been immature assessment of their actual processing of semantic information, unawareness of use of nonvisual cue systems of language, or inability to articulate description of a predictive process in reading. An implication is that teachers need to find opportunities to raise the consciousness of children regarding concept of mature reading. It appears not to be generalized even in practice.

Some questions remain regarding concept of reading by children of the study. Did the children read the reading-while-listening books orally because part of the reading-while-listening activity was oral narration, because part of their developmental reading instruction was oral reading, or because this is the natural mode of reading for children of this age? Did the children request to read the reading-while-listening books to the teacher because they think of reading as "reading to someone" or because they were delighted to demonstrate a new art and share a joyful experience and receive some positive feedback from a very pleased teacher? Would a record-plus-book rather than

teacher-plus-book have less model impact of "someone" reading orally? Did the teacher, however, model motivating enthusiasm and interest during the narrating? An implication for future study would be to use cassette-plus-book in one-to-one learning centers during the second half of first grade to determine effect on motivation for individual silent reading. If the tape recorder had a "pause" button, children could control "time out" for page turning.

Some other possible implications for future study of effects of reading-while-listening are as follows:

Lack of pressure for performance in an enrichment activity will enable children to focus greater attention and concentration on the story itself, strengthening these components of study skills as well as enhancing motivation to read for pleasure.

Listening and reading comprehension will be developed as the reading-while-listening group hears a good model of oral language, observing and inferring meaning from good phrasing, intonation, stress, and juncture while simultaneously associating oral and printed syntax.

Children deprived of an "elaborate code of language" (Entwisle, 1971) at home will have an opportunity to form a construct of the elaborate code of language used in books.

Superior reading rate and fluency for children of the reading-while-listening group will be observable in their oral reading of text materials in small-group developmental

reading instruction.

The reading-while-listening group will refine and generalize uses of form classes of words and their derivatives from auditory and visual input of syntax in interesting context.

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